

# **TAMIO AWARDS**

**Texas Association of Municipal Information Officers**



CITY OF COLLEGE STATION  
*Home of Texas A&M University®*

## **V. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

***Office of Public Communications  
2014 Year in Review***



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## V. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

### Office of Public Communications 2014 Year in Review

#### The Challenge

If a citizen approaches a city council member and asks, “What exactly does your Office of Public Communications do?” could he or she answer with any level of detail or confidence?

That scenario produces a fair amount of anxiety for any city, including College Station.

To ensure every member of the College Station City Council — and the City Manager’s Office — understands the depth, breadth and value of the work performed by our Office of Public Communications, we assembled our own 2014 Year in Review. It showcases quantity, volume and how many things did not happen simply by chance; Public Communications deeply influenced many of the city’s greatest successes during the past year.

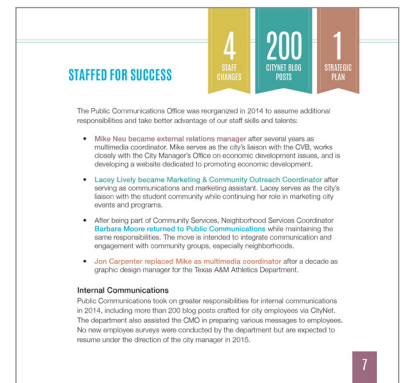
But how could we be certain every council member viewed the report? With their email inboxes plenty full, we opted instead for a nice printed piece they could hold in their hands — somewhat of a novelty these days. We felt the investment would be worth it if our goals were achieved.

***Bottom line: The Office of Public Communications puts its full weight behind telling good stories every single day. Once in a while, we feel it’s important to create some internal buzz about an unlikely hero—Public Communications.***

#### Goals

Our goal was to create a Year in Review report for Public Communications that illustrated the high level of professional support and strategy shown in 2014. The report wouldn’t just “gather dots,” it would connect the dots, with primary audiences being the College Station City Council and the City Manager’s Office.

An additional goal was to forgo the now-typical electronic delivery method and to create a highly visual, irregular-sized printed piece to earn our audience’s immediate attention.





## V. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

### Office of Public Communications 2014 Year in Review

## Impacts or Outcomes

The 2014 report was a visually engaging review of Public Communications' performance as a support function to city departments and to the city council. In 50 pages, the report covered:

- Citizen Engagement
- How PubCom is Staffed for Success
- Issue Management
- Marketing Success
- Media Relations
- Social and Digital Media
- Video Production
- Photos
- Media Survey Results
- Staff

The report was presented to the city council during a break in their annual strategic retreat, held Feb. 19, 2015. Not only did council members take time to read through the report, they carried their copies into a lunchtime executive session and continued to review it — commenting to one another about elements within the piece. In the hours and days following that executive session, individual council members referenced the report, remarking how they wished every department produced something like it.

**“This report is awesome. I wish all departments would do something like this.”**

**– Place-6 City Councilman James Benham**

## Project Budget

Because we opted to create a printed piece that better ensured it was read, the costs for 18 copies totaled \$318. No other tangible costs were incurred.

## Role of Outside Resources

All writing, photography, graphic design and survey work performed for the Year in Review occurred within College Station's Office of Public Communications.

See 2014 Year in Review included in the folder.

MARKETING SUCCESS

No. 2  
SMALL CITY  
BRAND

2.6K  
MOSQUITO BUNKS  
DELIVERED

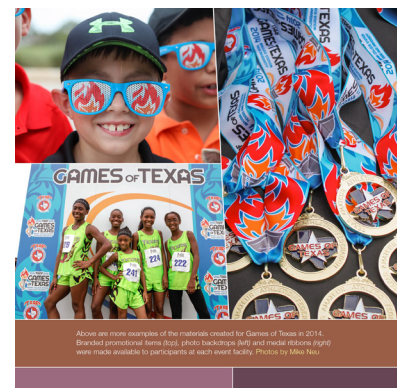
3  
TEXAS SIZED  
EVENTS

**City Accolades**  
Public Communications aggressively promoted a number of accolades the city received from various outside publications and entities in 2014, including being named by *Fortune* as the No. 2 small city in the country for business and careers. To keep better track of the city's recent honors, we developed a special webpage that includes links to major accolades received since 2010. We also developed a separate webpage dedicated to prestigious honors earned by various departments and staff.

**Mosquito Abatement Program**  
Several mosquitoes tested positive for West Nile Virus during a highly active mosquito season in 2014, which led to a wide-ranging and proactive public education effort. Neighborhood Services, now part of Public Communications, distributed 2,600 mosquito dunks – a record distribution – through the Mosquito Abatement Program, which grants funds to neighborhood and homeowners associations for the purchase of mosquito abatement products. The awareness campaign consisted of two blog posts, repeated emails to registered HOAs, multiple TV/radio interviews and pitched news stories, notifications for targeted mosquito spraying by the Public Works Department, frequent social media posts, a podcast, and a video on Channel 15.

**Athletic Tourism**  
Public Communications helped build and refine bid proposals for future events on behalf of Parks & Recreation and the BCS Convention and Values Bureau in 2014. As a result, College Station was awarded three events – 2015 TAAF Flag Football Championships, 2015 ASA/USA 10U National Championship and the 2018-19 TAAF Games of Texas – that are worth millions of dollars in economic impact.

15



CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

20+  
CITIZEN &  
STUDENTS

200+  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
LEADERS

18  
COMMUNITY  
MEETINGS

**Citizens University**  
More than 20 residents participated in the annual Citizens University, a free 11-week course organized and hosted by Public Communications that focuses on city departments, budgets, services and activities, along with the roles and responsibilities of city staff and elected officials. Participants asked questions, gave comments directly to department directors, staff and elected officials, and took part in hands-on activities to discover what it's like to work in each city department. Several Texas cities inquired about our CU program in 2014.

*"Citizens University is a great program. It really expanded my understanding of what goes into operating and sustaining a good, thriving community. I learned that city employees are people, too."*  
2014 CU PARTICIPANT

**Neighborhood Seminar Suppers**  
More than 200 neighborhood leaders and citizens attended our eight Neighborhood Seminar Suppers in 2014, which featured informative discussions with various city staff members on topics that impact College Station neighborhoods.

**Community Meetings**  
Public Communications staff attended 18 homeowner association, neighborhood association and community meetings in 2014. We also participated in the Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team, which is responsible for implementing and reporting neighborhood-related items in the city's four completed neighborhood plans. This activity helped the city maintain its Neighborhoods USA certification.

3